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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General expresses concern at reports of Turkish incursions into northern Iraq; urges Turkey to exercise restraint and to ensure safety of civilians in area.

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina calls for thorough review of UNPROFOR mandate and its implementation; says it would accept 30-day extension of mandate in meantime.

+ Fighting between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces intensifies around Tuzla; Croatia deploys troops near border with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ United Nations launches inter-agency appeal for $118 million to fund humanitarian programmes in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

+ United Nations appeals for $23 million to assist persons displaced by emergency situation in Chechnya.

+ Commission on Narcotic Drugs discusses questions of demand reduction and harm reduction.

+ DPI's Dag Hammarskjöld Library makes all United Nations bibliographic information available to public on CD-ROM.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed growing concern at reports of Turkish incursions into Iraqi territory with the stated goal of preventing attacks by Kurdish rebels based in northern Iraq. He strongly urged the Turkish Government to exercise restraint, and to ensure the safety of the civilian population, including refugees, in the area.

The Secretary-General also expressed concern that the continuation of the Turkish offensive might adversely affect United Nations relief operations in northern Iraq.

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Bosnia and Herzegovina has called for a thorough review of the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and of its actual implementation, before it is extended beyond 31 March. In a press conference at Headquarters today, the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mohamed Sacirbey, said there was a steadily growing gap between the mandate as provided for by the Security Council and its implementation.

Mr. Sacirbey said many factors should be considered in the review, such as the changes for UNPROFOR in Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the state of the peace process; and the failure of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to recognize its neighbours. Other factors for consideration included the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the failure to lift the siege of Sarajevo; the violation of the exclusion zones around Sarajevo and Gorazde, and continuing incursions into the other safe areas; the persistent onslaught against Bihac; and continuing ethnic cleansing in areas under Serbian occupation.

The Bosnian Government was willing to support a 30-day extension of UNPROFOR's mandate to provide time for the proposed review, he continued. It was also prepared to endorse measures to promote the peace process, improve the humanitarian situation, and secure the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Fighting between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces intensified to the north and east of Tuzla today, according to a United Nations spokesman. More than 700 detonations were recorded in the area this morning. However, the Bihac pocket was quiet following a surge in military activity around Velika Kladusa yesterday.

Meanwhile in Croatia, Croatian Serbs were conducting a three-day military exercise in Sector East, and removed 20 tanks, five artillery pieces and three armoured personnel carriers from United Nations collection points. The spokesman said the removal of those heavy weapons, and the deployment of them in the 10-kilometre exclusion zone, violated the cessation of hostilities agreement.

The spokesman went on to say that Croatian troops -- and possibly Bosnian Croat troops -- had deployed eight kilometres inside Sector South, along the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNPROFOR characterized that deployment as "a substantial incursion".

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The United Nations today launched a consolidated inter-agency appeal for $118 million to fund humanitarian programmes in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia between 1 April 1995 and 31 March 1996. The appeal covers the most

urgent needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable segments of the population in the three countries. The money sought will fund activities by United Nations agencies, the International Organization for Migration, and non-governmental organizations.

There are an estimated 890,000 refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan, 380,000 in Armenia, and 280,000 in Georgia. The lack of a durable political solution to the conflicts in the Caucasus has hindered their return. Meanwhile, economic problems have adversely affected living conditions for the general population in the three countries.

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The United Nations has also issued a consolidated inter-agency for almost $23 million for persons displaced by the emergency situation in Chechnya, Russian Federation. The funds will provide emergency assistance to 220,000 displaced persons in the neighbouring republics of Daghestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia for the first six months of 1995. It subsumes the flash appeal for Chechnya which was issued in February as an interim measure.

It is estimated that more than 90 per cent of the displaced persons are living with host families. Most are exposed to extreme over-crowding and poor sanitary conditions, and there are fears of epidemics.

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The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which is meeting in Vienna, has been addressing the question of how best to reduce the demand for illicit drugs. Several speakers suggested that "harm reduction" -- measures to alleviate the consequences of drug abuse, such as needle-exchange programmes -- should not be emphasized over demand reduction.

The Netherlands expressed concern that the concept of harm reduction had been misunderstood, while Canada, Australia and the Nordic countries suggested that a clearer definition be developed. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that it would be working with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to update a 13-year-old "Resource Book on Measures to Reduce Illicit Demand for Drugs". There was general agreement on the need to give attention to substances, such as alcohol, tobacco and solvents, which might not be illegal, but whose abuse often led to the abuse of illicit drugs.

The United States outlined its new drug control strategy, which emphasized the need for treatment to go hand in hand with law enforcement. Police and the courts must coordinate their efforts with other agencies, treatment providers, prevention specialists, teachers, religious leaders and the business community.

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The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has made all the files in the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) available to the public on a new CD-ROM product, "UNBIS Plus on CD-ROM". Previously, the database was available online only to United Nations offices, permanent missions and selected government agencies. UNBIS Plus provides new and user-friendly access without costly telecommunications charges.

UNBIS Plus is designed to make United Nations information accessible to both specialists and non-specialists, using standard PC and CD-ROM hardware and software. The user interface is in English, but Spanish and French versions are in preparation.

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